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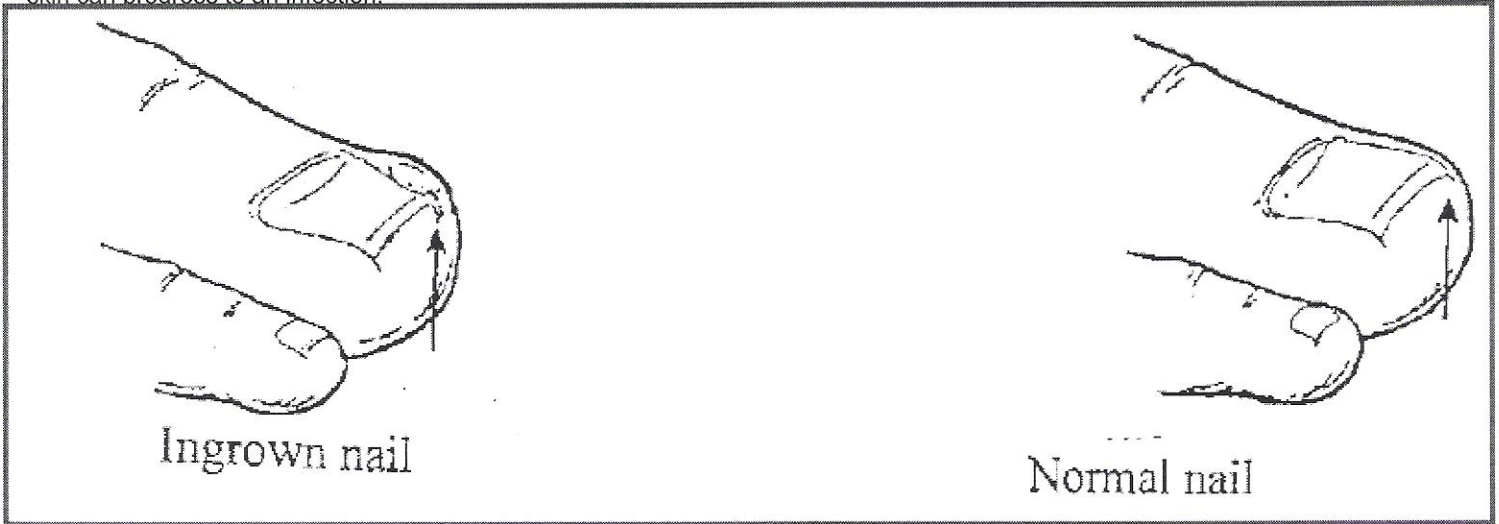
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Test Test

INGROWN TOENAIL

When a toenail is ingrown, the nail is curved downward and grows into the skin, usually at the nail borders (the sides of the nail). This "digging in" of the nail irritates the skin, often creating pain, redness, swelling and warmth in the toe.

If an *ingrown nail* causes a break in the skin, bacteria may enter and cause an infection in the area, which is often marked by drainage and a foul odor. However, even if your toe isn't painful, red, swollen or warm, a nail that curves downward into the skin can progress to an infection.



What Causes an Ingrown Toenail? Ingrown toenails can develop for various reasons. In many people, the tendency to have this common disorder is inherited. In other cases, an ingrown toenail is the result of trauma, such as stubbing your toe, having an object fall on your toe, or engaging in activities that involve repeated pressure on the toes, such as kicking or running.

The most common cause of ingrown toenails is improper trimming. Cutting your nails too short encourages the skin next to the nail to fold over the nail. Another cause of ingrown toenails is wearing shoes that are tight or short.

Treatment: Home treatment is strongly discouraged if you suspect you have an infection, or if you have a medical condition that puts your feet at high risk - for example, diabetes, nerve damage in the foot, or poor circulation.

Physician Care: The foot and ankle surgeon will examine your toe and select the treatment best suited for you.

Treatment may include:

- Oral antibiotics. If an infection is present, an oral antibiotic, may be prescribed.
- Surgery. A simple procedure, often performed in the office, is commonly needed to ease the pain and remove the offending nail. Surgery may include numbing the toe and removing a corner of the nail, a larger portion of the nail, or the entire nail.
- Permanent removal. Various techniques may be used to destroy or remove the nail root. This treatment prevents the recurrence of an ingrown toenail. Your foot and ankle surgeon will determine the most appropriate procedure for you.

Following nail surgery, a light bandage will be applied. Most people experience very little pain after surgery and may resume normal activity the next day. If Dr Pinsker has prescribed an oral antibiotic, be sure to take all the medication, even if your symptoms have improved.

If you notice a toenail becoming ingrown, red and sore, contact Dr. Pinsker immediately to prevent any complications from occurring.